

Approved For Release 1999/09/07 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000200

Cuba- Cat & Mouse

By Charles Portis
Of The Herald Tribune Staff

MIAMI

A tired and aching James E. Donovan, who flew to Miami by plane from Cuba yesterday afternoon with no word what ever on the success or failure of his dealings with Fidel Castro for the release of 1,111 captured Cuban invaders.

All he could tell reporters was that he will remain here for 48 hours, and that he expects to hear whether or not his offer has been accepted. He left these possibilities open to the future:

❶ The Cuban dictator may turn down his offer, which Mr. Donovan says is the "maximum" he can make.

❷ Or Castro may accept it.

❸ Or he may ask Mr. Donovan to return to Cuba for further negotiations.

"Your guess is as good as mine," he told the reporters before hustling off to an undisclosed destination for treatment of an aggravated case of bursitis of the shoulder.

Cuban exiles here grew increasingly dispirited over the prolonged negotiations, feeling apparently that Castro is playing a cat and mouse game with a dubious outlook. But Mr. Donovan said he was optimistic.

"I am always optimistic in anything I engage in until I abandon it," he told news men. The Democratic candidate

for the seat of Sen. Jacob K. Javits, R., N. Y., was uncommunicative and a little flip in parrying questions.

To the question, "What's holding things up?" he retorted, "Ask Premier Castro." "We're still getting along," he added, referring to the present series of talks, which he said had lasted five or six hours each in six sessions.

He does not plan to talk to President Kennedy while here, he said, in denying categorically that the United States government is involved in his dickering.

Speaking to the press in Miami Airport, he said that he will devote his waiting time here to "thinking" about the negotiations. As he talked, Enrique Llaca, executive of the Cuban Families Committee, was at his side.

Reporters tried hard to extract something more concrete from Mr. Donovan, but were unable. Would he say with certainty, for example, that he believes the prisoners will be released?

"No," he answered, "this would be very foolish. It would be false hope."

Asked how he felt about his safety in Cuba, he replied:

"I feel safer a good deal of the time than living in Brooklyn."

Nor would Mr. Donovan give details of what his so-called "maximum offer" actually amounted to in concrete terms.

"My work does not involve one dollar in cash," he insisted, explaining that it was a proposition based solely on medicine, drugs, medical supplies and infant formula foods.

It would be unfair, he said, for him to put a cash value on the materials offered in exchange for the prisoners because of differences in the ways of valuing them from monetary standpoints.

But in any case, he added, a first shipment of the supplies would be made to Castro before the release of the prisoners as a token of good faith in the event the deal is concluded.

The general estimate of cash value of the materials range from \$30 million up to \$62 million.

Mr. Donovan would not say where he will be staying in Miami, nor would he say whether

Premier Castro except that it was "in Cuba."

Families of prisoners who have been waiting here are now showing evidences of nervousness and edginess, even though all of them insist they are optimistic. About 150 of them were at the airport to greet Mr. Donovan.

In Miami Cuban exile sources could not confirm that a raid had been made on the Cuban port of Isabela de Sagua Monday night by the exile group which calls itself Alpha 66. A report Wednesday said the group inflicted 20 casualties on Russians and Cubans in a military installation, and that a railway switch yard, a military arsenal and a commissary had been dynamited along with four other strategic points on the north coast port.

In San Juan, an American Broadcasting Company correspondent quoted a purported leader of the Alpha 66 group, one Antonio Veciana, as saying that the attacking force of 30 exiles suffered five casualties and that the group was declaring war on all shipping, not Russian, carrying supplies to Cuba. He said there would be another raid within two weeks and two more before the end of the month.

FOIAb3b

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT



Associated Press wire photo

THE WOMEN WHO WAIT—Gathered around a radio in Miami, these women awaited news yesterday of Attorney James B. Donovan's negotiations with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. All have relatives among Bay of Pigs prisoners.